

Improved Uniform International LESSON

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Lesson for March 4

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JESUS TEACHES FORGIVENESS

LESSON TEXT—Matthew 18:21-35.
GOLDEN TEXT—If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.—Matthew 6:14, 15.

Forgiveness is the very essence of Christianity. In Christianity only do we find an adequate and proper dealing with sin, leading to forgiveness. In Christ alone do we find that forgiveness, cleansing and regeneration.

Since God has so willingly and wonderfully provided for our forgiveness, it would seem that we would need no urging to make us forgiving in spirit toward one another.

Yet it is indeed a melancholy fact that there are few Christians who practice as that of forgiveness. It is sad to see how much bitterness, unmercifulness, spite, harshness and unkindness there is among men (J. C. Ryle).

I. The Extent of Forgiveness (vv. 21, 22).

"How long do I have to stand it?" is the question of the human heart, especially if untouched by the spirit of Christ. The injustices of life, the offenses of our fellow men against us, all seem to pile up until the burden is about to crush us. What is the answer to man's question?

The Jews had an answer. He said three times is enough. Forgive once, yes. Again, yes. But the third time, no. Peter was bighearted enough to more than double that allowance of mercy. He was willing to forgive not just two or three times, but seven times.

The spirit of Christ swept all of that aside. He said that one should forgive 70 times seven. In other words, Christian forgiveness is to be unforgiving, unlimited, to know no weariness and have no boundaries. If one really forgives, it is because he has a forgiving spirit, and that spirit is not exhausted by use, but rather grows by exercise.

A word of caution is in order at this point. Let no one suppose that our Lord's instruction means that offenses against the law of the land or against the good order of society are to be overlooked and condoned.

It relates rather to the cultivation of a personal spirit of forgiveness, the laying aside of revenge, of malice, of retaliation which do not become the Christian.

II. The Motive of Forgiveness (vv. 23-34).

Two motives are given. The first is that since we ourselves are daily and hourly in need of forgiveness at the merciful hand of God, we should in turn be merciful toward those who sin against us. Compared with our offenses against the law of God, we know that the misdeeds of our neighbors against us are usually mere trifles. Remember what God has done for you, when you are tempted to be hard and ungracious with your brother.

The second motive is the remembrance that a day of judgment is to come. There is always a time of reckoning ahead, even as was the case with these servants. Remember not only what God has done for you and is doing for you, but what you must yet expect Him to do in that day of judgment. It will make you merciful and gracious in your judgment of others.

Forgiveness has a fine quality which commends itself to others. Note the sorrow of the fellow servants (v. 31). There is, then, a social value in true forgiveness.

III. The Importance of Forgiveness (v. 35).

A man dealing with his fellow man is apt to think that it is merely a matter between man and man. We are not dealing with a straight line between ourselves and our brother (that was Peter's error), but with a triangle at whose apex is God Himself.

If I expect God to forgive me, I must let my forgiveness flow out to my brother. If I deal with him as though God had nothing to do with the matter, then I must not try to count God's forgiveness into the picture when I stand indebted before Him.

God does not play favorites. He is no respecter of persons. He is as interested in the other man as He is in me. The Christian should have the same spirit.

Here we need a word of explanation. Let no one suppose that our redemption in Christ is contingent upon what we do toward our brethren. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Nor does the truth of our lesson mean that we are somehow going to bargain with God, trading a bit of our forgiveness toward others for His forgiveness of us. God is not interested in such transactions. But it does mean that if you cannot or will not forgive, you may well consider whether you are a Christian at all, for it is Christlike to forgive.

Creamed Comments On The Sunday School Lesson

Creamed comments on the Sunday School lesson, "Jesus Teaches Forgiveness."—Matthew 18:21-35 for Sunday, March 4.

The principal reason why Jesus came into the world was to bring us forgiveness, thus making our entrance into the heavenly kingdom possible. His great sacrifice in our behalf lays us under eternal obligation to treat others in the same way God has treated us.

v. 21. "Then came Peter to him and said, Lord how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him till seven times?" Peter claimed generosity in offering forgiveness seven times, more than twice the number required by law. Peter would limit forgiveness.

v. 22. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven." As God has forgiven us the great and unpayable debt which as sinners we owe to him, so also we must forgive our brethren the comparatively trifling debts which they have incurred by sinning against us. Since this parable concerns the kingdom of heaven, the teachings are applied to Christians and not to sinners.

v. 23. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a certain king which would take account of his servants." A business man will have a time for reckoning, a time for taking an inventory. So there must be a time when we must give an account to God for every deed done in the body.

v. 24. "And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents." In this illustration a great, unpayable debt between ten and fifteen million dollars in our money is indicated.

v. 25. "But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." We are the servants with whom God takes account. In this life we are brought to this reckoning by the preaching of the law, by awakening our conscience, by bringing us into adversities, by casting us into sore sicknesses, and by setting our sins before our face.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. What should one do with things that cause spiritual stumbling?
2. Why did Jesus come into the world?
3. Who said to Jesus, How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?
4. What will happen a man that will not forgive another?
5. What is Jesus' estimate of a little child?

Home Education

The richest comradeship develops among those who work together. The fruits of the soil will grow in this garden, but there will also grow mutual respect and appreciation. Families who work together learn the Christian virtue of hearing one another's burdens by actually bearing them in common tasks.

When the family reads together, the bonds of family life are woven into a web of Christian fellowship and understanding. Such an experience enriches the lives of the adults and uplifts the souls of the children.

The center of the home is the family meal. Here not only food is given and received but fellowship, love, and interdependence are shared. All that is best in personal and family life finds its finest growth and expression in the conversation and experiences of the Christian family meal.

MARCH to Church

Some one has said, "On the average, less than 25% of the population in various communities and cities are in church on Sunday." Are you one of the 25%? Take advantage of the Freedom to worship.

IN THE MONTH OF MARCH

Sunday School 9:30 A. M. Worship 10:30 A. M.
N.Y.P.S. 6:45 P. M. Evening Service 7:30 P. M.

Church of The Nazarene

Marshall and No. 7th Decatur, Ind.

v. 26. "The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." This man was insincere because the debt was so great that no man could honestly earn enough to pay it.

v. 27. "Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." Here is represented the mercy of God. All of us have sinned. We owe to God more than we can pay. "Jesus paid it all."

v. 28. "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest." The debt here in our money was about \$15, a small amount compared with his debt which had been forgiven. The unforgiving spirit which God abhors, and the contrast between what we owe God and what our fellows owe us in here caught. The Almighty really says to us, Do you come begging mercy before the throne of grace if you are not willing to accord mercy to those who have offended against you. The length to which a man with a selfish, unforgiving spirit will go is seen in verses 29 and 30.

v. 31. "So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done." Here is an example of an aroused public conscience. When right speaks through an aroused public conscience proper laws can be made and they will be executed. Here is one important function of the church—arousing public conscience on moral issues.

v. 32, 33. "Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldst thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow servant even as I had pity on thee?" It was expected that this servant would deal with his debtor as he had been dealt with. So we pray when we say "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

v. 34. "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due him." The sin of not accepting inherent responsibility because of grace and forgiveness calls for punishment.

v. 35. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts do not forgive every one his brother their trespasses." God is a God of justice as well as a God of love.



Mrs. John Wilson Wood, secretary of the committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, has announced that 100,000 Jews are members of Christian churches in the U. S. and Canada. And that 145 ministers of Jewish background are serving Protestant churches. One is a bishop and seven are professors in Christian colleges and seminaries.

The Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist church proposes to assist Japanese Americans in regaining their full rights as citizens of the U. S. as follows: By granting freedom of movement anywhere on the same basis as other Americans and aliens. (2) By opposing all attempts to disfranchise them, or send them back to Japan after the war, or farm them out on Pacific islands, or keep them indefinitely on isolated reservations in this country, or

CHURCHES

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

First Mass.....6:00 A. M.
Second Mass.....7:30 A. M.
Children's Mass.....9:00 A. M.
High Mass.....10:15 A. M.
Week day Mass.....7:30 A. M.
Way of the Cross Sunday 2:30 P. M.
Communion Sunday for the St. Agnes Sodality.

Tuesday, Lenten Sermon 7:30 P. M.

Friday—Way of the Cross 7:30 P. M.

Rev. Joseph J. Selmetz, pastor

Church of God

Glen E. Marshall, pastor

9:30-11:20 a. m.—Unified service.

6:30 p. m.—Shining Lights. Mrs. Mary Hazelwood, leader.

6:30 p. m.—Christian Crusaders.

Robert Strickler, counselor; Bill Hawkins, president.

7:30 p. m.—Evening service.

7:30 p. m. Wednesday evening—Mid-week prayer service.

The public is most cordially invited to attend the services of this congregation.

The church where being a Christian makes you a member.

First United Brethren Church

Rev. R. R. Wilson, minister

Sabbath School, 9:15 a. m. Curtis Hill, superintendent.

Morning worship with holy communion, 10:30 a. m.

Christian Endeavor, 6:30 p. m.

Evening worship, 7:30 p. m. Sermon, "Stange Deathbed Companion."

Quarterly meeting following evening service.

Prayer meeting and choir practice Wednesday, 7 and 8 p. m.

Church of the Nazarene

Marshall and North Seventh Sts.

J. T. Trueax, minister

Sunday School, 9:30 a. m. Doyle Lytle, superintendent.

Morning worship, 10:30 a. m.

Special singing by male quartet. Message by pastor.

Junior church, 6:45 p. m. Mrs. Plasterer, director. They are studying the life of Christ. See that your child is there.

Young peoples service, 6:45 p. m. An other interesting service that you will not want to miss. The service will be different. Special singing, Bible quiz, and other interesting and spiritual things.

Evening service, 7:30 p. m. Our church was well filled Sunday night. Special singing by the male quartet and message by the pastor. Come praying, enter worshipping, depart serving.

Prayer meeting Wednesday, 7:30 p. m.

First Methodist Church

M. O. Lester, minister.

ANSWERS TO "DO YOU KNOW?"

1. Stumbling blocks should be removed.—(Matthew 18:9).
2. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.—(Matthew 18:11).
3. Peter.
4. He shall be duly punished.—(Matthew 18:35).
5. It is a fit member of his kingdom.—(Matthew 19:13).

to make property ownership difficult. (3) By aiding all loyal to the U. S. in again taking their places in our civilization anywhere they choose to make their homes, and by offering them our friendship and our protection. All this, that they may have a part in the task of rebuilding the world.

While on his recent visit as a member of an Episcopal church mission to the Church of England, Bishop G. Ashton Oldham of Albany dedicated an American flag presented by General Eisenhower to St. Andrew's Cathedral, Aberdeen, Scotland.

The flag was given by the commanding General "to be preserved as a memorial to the association in arms of the American and British peoples in this war for freedom."

Many feel that our chaplains in the army and navy are not especially exposed to danger, but this is not true. During the present war, the total of 114 army chaplains have received 129 decorations for gallantry in action. Of these, five men wear the Distinguished Service Cross, twenty-four have been killed in battle or have died of wounds, while non-battle deaths have totaled thirty-nine. Some thirty other chaplains have recovered from wounds suffered, and thirty-three others are prisoners of war.

Lowell J. Smith, Supt.

"Hand Carved Gods" will be the subject of the morning sermon by the minister.

At the Vesper hour Rev. T. J. Trueax will be the guest speaker. All members are asked to support by their presence these services.

"What our revival should mean to our Church school" will be the topic Lowell J. Smith will use in the mid-week service.

Keep in mind "The Bible" evangelistic party will be with us Easter Sunday, April 1st and for two weeks. They will be at Grace United Brethren church from March 11th to March 25th. We will want to visit the meetings there and get acquainted with the Bibles.

Church school classes at 9:20 a. m.

First Presbyterian

At Five Points

9:00 a. m.—Junior Bible hour, with Mrs. W. A. Lower, directing.

9:30 a. m.—Sunday School with W. P. Schrock, superintendent.

10:30 a. m.—Morning service with Rev. Albert Swenson of Wren, O., in charge.

Come and bring your friends.

First Evangelical Church

F. H. Wilford, minister

Sunday School, 9:15 a. m. Gregg McFarland, superintendent.

Morning worship, 10:10 a. m. Rev. M. O. Herman, district superintendent, will preach.

Youth Fellowship, 6 p. m. Intermediate and Senior.

Evening service, 7 p. m. "The Back Door of Life."

Administrative Council, Tuesday evening, 7 p. m.

Mid-week Lenten service, Wednesday, 7 p. m.

Youth choir rehearsal, Wednesday, 6 p. m.

Adult choir rehearsal, Wednesday, 8 p. m.

Special meeting March 18-April 1. Rev. Leroy Geiger, pastor of Crescent Avenue Evangelical church is the speaker for the first week.

Zion Evangelical and Reformed

William C. Feiler, pastor

Church School, 9 a. m. Luther Glase, superintendent.

Worship service at 10 a. m. Sermon, "Jesus Describes Himself—I Am the Good Shepherd." Come and worship with us. Visitors are always welcome.

Youth Fellowship, 6:30 p. m. Official board meeting on Monday evening at 7:30 p. m. in the church parlors.

Senior catechetical class on Wednesday at 4:15 p. m.

Junior choir rehearsal on Wednesday at 6:30 p. m.

Mid-week Lenten service on Wednesday at 7:30 p. m. Meditation: "The Arrest of Jesus."

Senior choir rehearsal after the Lenten service, also on Friday at 7 p. m.

Catechetical classes on Saturday morning; seniors at 9, juniors at 10 a. m.

Decatur Missionary Church

164 S. Second street

Pumphrey Jewelry

Store

Gifts for All

Occasions.

We find God when our quiet responds to His quiet.

You Can Save—

Gasoline and Repair Bills

with Western's Replacement Parts.

Tires—Batteries—Pa to Oils.

Western Auto Store

V. R. Hudson,

111 S. Second St.

Charles V. Glenn, pastor

Sunday, 9:30 a. m.—Sunday school with classes for all ages.

Old and young alike will enjoy these Bible classes.

10:30 a. m.—Morning worship with message delivered by the pastor.

7:30 p. m.—Evening worship service.

Monday, 7:30 p. m. begins a two week evangelistic campaign with Rev. Oscar Eicher, pastor of the West Berne Missionary church.

Special music will be provided by members of the church, and Fort Wayne Bible Institute.

Services begin at 7:30 p. m. every night except Saturday. The public is cordially invited.

First Baptist Church

Carey R. Moser, pastor

9:25 a. m.—Sunday School. C. E. Bell, superintendent.

10:15 a. m.—Morning worship. Communion meditation by pastor. Two numbers by the choir. Lord's Supper.

7:30 p. m.—Evening service. Men's choir, with brief message by the pastor.

Everybody welcome.

Zion Lutheran Church

Monroe and Eleventh Sts.

Paul W. Schultz, pastor

Sunday school and Bible class, 9 a. m.

Divine services, 10 a. m. Lutheran hour, 11:30 a. m.

Church choir, 1:00 p. m.

S. S. teachers, Monday, 7:30 p. m. Lenten services, Wednesday, 7:30 p. m.

Married couples club, Wednesday, 8:30 p. m.

Missionary society, Thursday, 9 a. m.

Saturday catechism school, 8:30 a. m.

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THE IDEAL LUNCH

Open 24 hours a day.

Meals, Short Orders, Steaks and Chops